

Proclamation 6219 of October 30, 1990

Refugee Day, 1990

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Ever since the first Europeans came to this country in search of freedom and opportunity, America has been viewed as a safe haven and a source of hope for millions of people around the globe. We take tremendous pride in our leading efforts to assist refugees, and we continue to cherish the great and generous spirit embodied by our magnificent Statue of Liberty. As Emma Lazarus wrote in her timeless sonnet to the famed Mother of Exiles, "from her beacon-hand glows worldwide welcome."

Over the years, the United States has held its doors open to those seeking refuge from tyranny and persecution, and we have encouraged other free nations to do the same. We have proudly received in this country thousands of individuals who—though they arrived with scarcely more than the clothes on their backs—have not only built new lives for themselves and for their families but also made extraordinary contributions to our society. At the same time, we have also worked to overcome those conditions that compel many refugees to flee their homelands. For example, we have steadfastly defended the universal cause of freedom and justice, asserting our conviction that no one should live in fear because of his or her race, nationality, religion, or political beliefs. We have also strived to promote peace and economic development in countries beset by poverty and strife.

Despite such efforts, however, the population of refugees in the world has increased dramatically during the past few years to its present total of more than 15,000,000 people. Thus, we remain firmly committed to assisting refugees and to advancing respect for individual dignity and human rights around the world. As we continue our own efforts, we call on other nations to increase their assistance to refugees in need. The sad plight of refugees has been brought home to us once again in recent weeks as we have seen hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing Saddam Hussein's naked aggression in Kuwait and his brutal policies at home.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 375, has designated October 30, 1990, as "Refugee Day" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 30, 1990, as Refugee Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fifteenth.

GEORGE BUSH